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DE GAULLE AND L'AFFAIRE ... Alexander Werth

CPYRGHT

Paris

It is tempting to say that there are more important things in the world than the Ben Barka scandal. This month, the Common Market crisis, which had dragged on for more than half a year, at last came to a reasonably satisfactory end. Weighing up the pros and cons, all the Six decided that it was in their interests to let the Common Market continue. The five other partners refused to put on paper their agreement with France's objections to the Council's majority vote in favor of "supranationality"; but it almost comes to the same thing: if they do not want to break up the Common Market (and, for the present, they obviously don't), they must act as though they had subscribed to France's objections. The French in-

sist on this point in part because they believe that if the majority vote does not take force, it will be easier for Great Britain to join the Common Market in the near future. In 1963, during his great love affair with Adenauer, de Gaulle slammed the door in the face of "America's Trojan horse," but he has since discovered that the real Trojan horse is not Britain at all but Germany, and he would welcome in the Common Market a major partner who shared his objections to supranationality.

In fact, though, de Gaulle no longer rejects, as he did last summer, any kind of political union; during the election campaign in December, he defined his position:

Once, as I hope, we get over the Common Market ordeal, we should

like to propose once again . . . the beginnings of a political cooperation. I am sure that, sooner or later, England will join. But this would not be a supranational Europe. Europe is what it is. But it could become a cooperative body and, after a time, a confederation.

During the campaign, de Gaulle became acutely aware that if France strongly approved his foreign policy in respect of NATO, the Atlantic Alliance, Vietnam and his *rapprochement* with the Russians (he is to visit Moscow this summer), the country, particularly the French farmers, was made exceedingly nervous by the thought that the Common Market might disintegrate if de Gaulle persisted in his tough policy, as illustrated by the June 30 break-up at Brussels. Not that the French were alone to blame; men